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ABSTRACT

The Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force documented anecdotal evidence of homophobia in child care and school age communities, including: (1) refusal to accept children from lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) families into child care; (2) biased attitudes expressed to children when they speak about their families; and (3) demonstrated lack of understanding of the unique issues that children and LGBT families face on a day-to-day basis even when biased attitudes are not expressed or may not exist. Adopting an Appreciative Inquiry methodology, the Task Force undertook a study to identify the best of what is currently happening in child care for LGBT parents and children, to envision what might be in the future, to foster dialogue about what should be, and to develop provocative propositions for shaping the most positive future imaginable for child care that supports LGBT families. The topics explored were school climate/environment, curriculum, resources, staff training, parent information, policies/procedures, parent involvement, "out" role models, anti-bias philosophy, and leadership. Appreciative interviews were conducted with LGBT parents/guardians and child care providers. One hundred sixty-seven stories were transcribed documenting the best that currently exists in child care for LGBT parents and children. Thirteen stories appear in this report. Peer researchers and participants at a Community Summit and at the 1998 WAEYC (Washington Association for the Education of Young Children) Conference read all the stories and identified compelling forces and elements that created the positive aspects of the stories. These elements were clustered into five core themes: provider staff awareness and enlightenment; family pride and self pride; non-discrimination policies, procedures, and practices; curriculum and environment which reflect and affirm all families and cultures; and communication that builds understanding. Participants stretched and expanded these themes by imagining the best possible world of child care for LGBT parents and children and discussed provocative propositions. (Appendices contain study materials, resources, and 14 references.) (EV)

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THE LESBIAN AND GAY CHILD CARE TASK FORCE: REPORT ON QUALITY CHILD CARE

ED 437 174

A report documenting the very best in child care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their children with the sole purpose of offering hope and direction to enhance the quality of child care for children and families.

Our Families ▼ Our Children!

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Children Deserve the Best

The Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force
supports all children, families, and staff in early childhood and school-age programs in developing to their fullest potential by creating positive, supportive, and non-homophobic environments that are inclusive of gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender educators, parents and their children.

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We gratefully acknowledge the courageous parents, guardians and child care providers who shared their stories and photos of the best that is in child care.
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Abstract

The Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force documented anecdotal evidence of homophobia in child care and school age communities including:

- Refusal to accept children from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) families into child care.
- Biased attitudes expressed to children when they speak about their families.
- Demonstrated lack of understanding of the unique issues that children and LGBT families face on a day-to-day basis even when biased attitudes are not expressed or may not exist.

Adopting an Appreciative Inquiry methodology, the Task Force undertook a study to identify the best of what is currently happening in child care for LGBT parents and children, to envision what might be in the future, to dialogue about what should be and to develop provocative propositions for shaping the most positive future that can be imagined for child care that supports children of LGBT families. The topics explored were:

School Climate/Environment	Policies/Procedures
Curriculum	Parent Involvement
Resources	"Out" Role Models
Staff Training	Anti-Bias Philosophy
Parent Information	Leadership

Appreciative interviews were conducted with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents/guardians and child care providers. One hundred sixty-seven stories were transcribed documenting the best that currently exists in child care for LGBT parents and children. Thirteen stories appear in this study. Peer researchers, participants at a Community Summit and at the 1998 WAEYC (Washington Association for the Education of Young Children) Conference read all the stories and identified compelling forces and elements that created the positive aspects of the stories. These elements were clustered into five core themes:

- Provider Staff Awareness and Enlightenment
- Family Pride and Self Pride
- Non-Discrimination Policies, Procedures and Practices
- Curriculum and Environment which Reflect and Affirm All Families and Cultures
- Communication that Builds Understanding

Participants stretched and expanded these themes by imagining the best possible world of child care for LGBT parents and children. Some of the provocative propositions they imagined were:

Every teacher and staff member is comfortable with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families and children. Child care centers are very clear in word and action that all families are welcome. Words like partner, co-parent, guardian and extended family members appear on forms and written communication. Teachers and staff are trained in diversity and anti-bias education. Books and images of LGBT families are in every center. Family pictures are displayed with pride. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teachers, staff and family members are out to each other and to the community. Children are validated every day by teachers and providers who recognize their family and honor their diversity.

Provocative propositions paved the way for participants to make their own individual action commitments, and to define next step initiatives which provide stakeholders with a challenging agenda for the future.

Section One

The Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force Needs Assessment

Introduction and Purpose

Hopes and Beliefs

Methodology—Appreciative Inquiry

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The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Early Childhood Needs Assessment

"We have a gay family in our child care program with two dads and a little boy. One is Papa, the other is Dad."—Child Care Provider

Introduction and Purpose

Diverse family structures challenge our traditional paradigm of what should be.

Children and families continue to change and call for new responses of understanding and inclusion. We know that children experience exclusion and separation because of racial, language and developmental differences. In recent years, research and information have become more available in providing culturally relevant services for children of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Yet most of us have little understanding of what challenges face children of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) parents. We are often at a loss when it comes to knowing how to include, support and provide resources to them. Diverse family structures such as these challenge our traditional paradigms of what should be. Often we aren't so sure how to respond and what to do to create a safe and caring place for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents, guardians and their children.

The Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force was formed in 1996 to address the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents, guardians, educators and their children. It was modeled after the African American, Latino and the Asian/Pacific Islander Child Care Task Forces. These culturally specific networks are doing outstanding work to improve child care in their communities. The mission of the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force is to support all children, families, and staff in early childhood and school-age programs in developing to their fullest potential by creating positive, supportive, and non-homophobic environments that are inclusive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender young people, educators, parents and their children.

The Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force reflects a broad spectrum of persons from diverse backgrounds and occupations. Members include state licensors, Head Start education coordinators, teachers, parents, public health nurses, directors, providers and other professionals.

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Eight to 12 million American children are currently being raised by lesbian and gay households. Approximately six per cent of the U.S. population is made up of lesbian and gay families with children.

Significant accomplishments by the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force include:

- Providing information to families about "gay welcoming and gay friendly" child care programs in King County.
- Working in coalition with other groups and task forces to provide education and training around anti-bias issues, including racism, classism, sexism and homophobia.
- Developing and distributing culturally relevant materials and resources that help build positive, inclusive environments for educators, parents and their children.
- Creating a network of people who are committed to reducing homophobia in early childhood education and school-age communities.
- Researching the current reality of how well child care providers and early childhood educators are including and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents/guardians and their children in order to enhance the quality of care for children and parents.
- Publishing this report on quality child care for LGBT families.

The need for the study becomes evident as more and more data confirm the growing numbers of LGBT families. In a fact sheet put out by *Lavender Families Resource Network (Lesbian Mothers' National Defense Fund), 1994*, the following facts are indicated:

- There are an estimated three to five million lesbian mothers in the United States. Gay fathers number around one to three million.
- Eight to 12 million American children are currently being raised by lesbian and gay households. Approximately six per cent of the U.S. population is made up of lesbian and gay families with children.

Cleryl A. Parks, in an article entitled "Lesbian Parenthood: A Review of the Literature" appearing in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, Vol 68 #3, July, 1998*, states that "Employing a variety of assumptions, researchers have projected numbers ranging from 200,000-3 million lesbian-parent families (Kirkpatrick, 1987) to 1.5-5 million lesbian mothers (Falk, 1989) living with 6-14 million children (Patterson, 1992)." While 60% of parents with young children are in the work force, it follows that many children in child care programs have parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Currently, most early childhood programs are not culturally relevant for children of LGBT parents. Curriculum and resources do not reflect their families. Staff training to address homophobia is rarely provided.

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Homophobic anecdotes in the early childhood and school-age communities have been documented by the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force. These incidents include:

- Refusal to accept children from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families into child care.
- Biased attitudes expressed to children when they speak about their families.
- Demonstrated lack of understanding of the unique issues that children and LGBT families face on a day-to-day basis even when biased attitudes are not expressed or may not exist.

This data and our knowledge of the importance of positive early childhood experiences which build pride and self-esteem in children provided impetus and justification for this study.

In the summer of 1998, the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force made the decision to undertake a needs assessment to assess and enhance quality child care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and children. Funding was sought and provided for this project by the City of Seattle Comprehensive Child Care Program, the King County Child Care Program and the Pride Foundation. The funding made it possible to hire a lead researcher and a team of eight researchers to design and facilitate the research project. Researchers were selected with the primary goal of hiring a diverse and qualified team. Researchers included teachers, providers, parents, vocational rehabilitation counselor, student labor organizer and preschool director. The ethnic cultures included two African Americans, one Asian Pacific Islander, one Latino and four European Americans.

Hopes and Beliefs

The hope and belief of this project is that the stories and findings, conclusions and recommendations will result in the following outcomes:

- Generate new openness to accepting children from lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families into child care programs of their choice.
- Cause caregivers and providers to desire and receive training and support in better serving children of LGBT parents.
- Inspire leaders to design and implement policies that clearly support and include lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their children.
- Generate a level of responsiveness to LGBT family issues that will grow over time in the child care field.
- Widely distribute the research study to inspire other communities to do similar needs assessments.

Methodology—Appreciative Inquiry

The needs assessment was a qualitative study utilizing a methodology developed by David Cooperrider of Case Western University, called "Appreciative Inquiry." Research has shown that human systems tend to evolve in the direction of positive anticipatory images of the future. Familiar examples of this are the positive use of placebos in medicine, the Pygmalion dynamic in learning environments, and the power of images to shape consciousness. Appreciative Inquiry identifies and values the factors that give life to an organization or a system, on the proven theory that positive images do more to shape positive actions than more traditional "negative" problem solving approaches.

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Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry begins by appreciating and valuing the "Best" of "What is" in order to move to "What might be." In contrast, most other research models begin by identifying a problem and eventually moving toward action planning to solve the problem. The most prevalent change strategy of organizations and individuals is problem solving. Appreciative Inquiry, however, focuses not on solving a problem, but on realizing positive future visions. The following chart compares the two approaches:

Problem Solving	**Appreciative Inquiry**
"Felt Need" and Identification of Problem	Appreciating and valuing the "Best" of "What is"
Analysis of Causes	Envisioning "What might be"
Analysis of Possible Solutions	Dialoguing "What should be"
Action Planning	Imagining "What will be"
Basic Assumption: An organization is a problem to be solved	Basic Assumption: An organization is a mystery to be embraced

(Adapted from David Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) "Appreciative Inquiry Into Organizational Life" in Research in Organizational Change And Development Pasmore and Woodman (EDS) Vol. 1, JAI Press by Sue Annis Hammond and Cathy Royal, PH D in *Lessons From the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry*.)

Sue Annis Hammond explains the model well:

We take what we know and we talk about what could be. We stretch what we are to be more than what we have already been successful at. We envision a future that is an organization of the BEST. Because we have derived a future from *reality*, we *know it CAN HAPPEN*.

Appreciative Inquiry holds many advantages over traditional change processes. Steven M. Cato, in a paper entitled *"Appreciative Inquiry: Positively Creating Organization Change,"* concludes that:

- By describing a future that integrates personal as well as professional components, a vast amount of energy is created for change.
- Because the process is inclusive there is large scale buy-in to well-defined goals, and
- The process has a much higher tendency to build bridges between sub-groups than to build barricades. This avoids resistance to change that often is a part of the problem solving model.

It is the fervent belief of the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force that systems and organizations will change as they prepare future generations of families and children to move into the new millennium in solidarity and pride. All children deserve the best in child care regardless of individual differences and family structures.

All children deserve the best in child care regardless of individual differences and family structures.

Systems and organizations will change as they prepare future generations of families and children to move into the new millennium in solidarity and pride.

The study consisted of 10 phases:

1. Developing the research proposal
2. Recruiting the research team
3. Designing the interview questions
4. Conducting interviews with child care providers and LGBT parents/guardians
5. Transcribing interviews and stories of the "Best" that is
6. Sharing information at a Community Summit and the 1998 WAEYC (Washington Association for the Education of Young Children) Conference to uncover themes and define compelling forces that create positive change
7. Creating provocative propositions by engaging participants in visioning for the future – "Imagine a World . . . What Would It Look Like?"
8. Recording personal actions and "Next Step" Recommendations that improve the quality of child care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and their children
9. Publishing a report of the process and findings—including recommendations and resources for child care providers, community leaders and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents
10. Broadcasting the findings and stories

Designing the interview questions was an extremely important phase. We have heard it said that "If you don't ask the right questions you will never get the right answers." Appreciative Inquiry is not so much concerned with the right answers, but rather with open ended questions that seek to allow the participants to speak, in story form, the truth as they live it and to uncover the very best of what is.

The researchers brainstormed the following two questions: "What have you seen or experienced that has "worked" for children and LGBT families in the early childhood and school-age community?" and "What would we need to learn more about in order to improve the quality of child care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents/guardians and their children?" As topics were identified we designed questions to allow participants in the study to respond with stories about these topics based on their own experience.

The topics explored were:

School Climate/Environment	Policies/Procedures
Curriculum	Parent Involvement
Resources	"Out" Role Models
Staff training	Anti-bias Philosophy
Parent Information	Leadership

The purpose of the interviews was to collect information from LGBT parents, guardians and child care providers about times when they experienced any of these aspects working at its best in their program. Through the interviews,

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researchers gained valuable information about what forces and qualities were present to make these positive things, events or actions happen.

Different sets of interview questions were developed for child care providers and LGBT parents. Researchers were trained in interviewing techniques and in the art of appreciative interviewing. (Most of us are accustomed to looking for problems and talking about what doesn't work in an organization. An appreciative inquiry was new to all of us—researchers, as well as participants.)

The interview process began something like this:

> *Before we start I'd like to explain a little bit about what we are going to do because it may be different from other interviews. This is going to be an "appreciative interview." I am going to ask you questions about times when you see things working at their "best" in your child care program. Many times, we try to ask questions about things that aren't working well—the problems—so that we can fix them. In this case, we try to find out about things at their best—the successes—so that we can find out what works and find ways to infuse more of it into everyday life for your child. It's also like what we do with children when we affirm their smallest successes and triumphs so that they will hold a positive image of themselves and then envision even greater possibility. The end result of the interview will enable us to understand the "life-giving forces" which provide vitality to child care. Do you have any questions?"*

A purposive sampling was developed to ensure the respondents represented a broad spectrum of LGBT families and child care providers. We made a concerted effort to include families of color, families with children with special needs and child care centers serving diverse populations of families and children. (Please refer to Appendix A and B to review the Participant Agreement Form and Confidential Information Form.)

The interview process not only served to gather information to help other child care providers and LGBT parents and guardians. It was a thought provoking and change-inducing experience for researchers as well. As stories unfolded and successes were shared, positive energy was created.

Some Interesting Data About the Study:

- Eight peer researchers conducted 44 interviews.
- Forty of the participants lived in Seattle, WA and 4 participants lived in King County, outside Seattle city limits. Three were from East King County and 1 was from South King County.
- Interviewees included 11 child care providers and 33 parents.
- LGBT parents included 4 gay men, 27 women who are lesbian, 1 transgender parent and 1 bisexual parent.
- The 33 LGBT parents interviewed included 28 co-parents, 4 single parents and 1 blended family made up of 2 dads and 2 moms.
- Two families had a child with special needs.
- Twenty-nine families had 1 child. Four families had 2 children.
- The ages of their children ranged from 11 months to 9 years of age.
- Thirty-five of the 44 family participants identified as European American. Other ethnic groups represented in this study were: African American (2), Latino (3), Native American (2), Japanese American (1) and East Indian (1).
- Eight of the 11 providers interviewed served large groups of children (30 to 110). Three providers served small groups of children (1 to 18). Forty-six percent of the children were of school age, 5 through 12; 21 percent of the children are preschoolers, ages 3 through 4 and 33 percent were infants or toddlers, ages 11 months through age 2.
- All providers served diverse groups of children including children from LGBT families.

Forty-four interviews were conducted, generating 167 stories in response to various questions and themes. Researchers read all stories and then through a directed process selected 24 stories in which strong themes were clearly present.

Wider Community Involvement

The 24 selected stories were presented at a Community Summit and at the 1998 WAEYC (Washington Association for the Education of Young Children) Conference.

The purpose of these presentations was to allow as many participants, child care providers and community leaders as possible to interact with the data and identify core themes, make recommendations and to imagine what these stories might mean for the future of child care.

The Community Summit included representation from child care providers and teachers; LGBT parents, guardians and friends; Safe Schools Coalition; Child Care Resources; Seattle/King County Public Health Department; Seattle Comprehensive Child Care Program; Seattle Human Services Department; ECEAP (Early Childhood Education Assistance Program); Office of Child Care Policy; S.T.A.R.S. (Washington State Training and Registry System) and the King County Child Care Program.

These two groups, plus the peer researchers and the members of the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force reviewed the stories, identified the "Best" of what exists in child care for LGBT families, noted themes, developed provocative propositions, imagined the best possible future world for child care and defined next step initiatives as recommendations for ongoing action to support LGBT parents and their children.

Section Two

Stories

The Power of Stories

Selected Parent and Child Care Provider Stories

Core Themes and Compelling Forces

Summary of Core Themes

The Power of Stories

"The world is made of stories, not atoms."

—Muriel Rukeyser

Change can be achieved by identifying what works and focusing energy on doing more of it.

Stories have the power to heal and to change. In each story of this study there is truth from the respondent's perspective about something that works for LGBT parents and their children. Change can be achieved by identifying what works and focusing energy on doing more of it.

The interview protocol designed by the research team was guided by three lines of inquiry:

1. When and where has this phenomenon been at its best in this organization?
2. What are the organizational factors or practices that make this phenomenon possible?
3. What are the possibilities which will enhance or maximize the potential for continued excellence?

The following stories were selected for inclusion in this report because they are the best examples of stories having identifiable themes and compelling forces. Themes and compelling forces may be actions, events, persons, the environment—any factors that cause the positive experience expressed in each story. The themes and compelling forces listed after the 13 stories which follow were identified by the researchers and participants at the Community Summit and WAEYC Conference.

Please refer to Appendix C and D to review the interview questions used to gather stories from parents and child care providers.

Selected Parent and Child Care Provider Stories

Story One The Trumpet Swan Triumphs

To let me know a little bit more about the child care situation you have, think about a day when everything about your child care arrangement really worked for you and your child—a day when you felt particularly satisfied at the end of the day. Tell me the story of that day.

> The year before my daughter was in preschool, I had just come out. I had separated from my husband. He was very angry, outing me at school. He was concerned that my being lesbian would be harmful to the children. At the time I was not yet comfortable. However, at school I felt support. No one commented or said anything, but there was a newsletter that helped a lot. Have you ever read E.B.White's *A Trumpet Swan*? He also wrote *Charlottes's Web*. Anyway, the book is about a trumpet swan that is disabled. This particular trumpet swan is mute, which is a pretty difficult thing for a trumpet swan. **The trumpet swan triumphs** over this and falls in love with a female swan. The teacher had switched the pronoun! The trumpet swan who is usually seen as male was now female. Besides doing this incredible, triumphant thing of overcoming adversity, she also falls in love with a female swan. The teacher explained in the newsletter why she switched the pronoun and read the story to the class that way. I felt so happy reading this! I went to her and "came out." I told her how much the article meant to me.
>
> As told by a mother new to her lesbian identity and recently divorced.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Teacher's creativity in changing pronouns to reflect a different possibility
- Use of newsletter to educate
- Creating a welcoming environment in which parents can be "out"
- Appreciation for diversity and differences

Story Two We Inch "Out" a Little Bit More

Think about a time when you felt especially proud of your child's center, teacher or staff—when you felt pleased to be associated with them. Tell me what happened that led you to feel such pride.

> Well that was what I was just talking about! When the infant teachers put up that poster (LGBT welcoming poster). It was like a turning point. Well, actually the turning point was when the center started to include me as a family—that emergency with my partner—and I had to start picking our daughter up. Knowing the center supported me as my daughter's other mom has made all the difference for me. I feel included and connected and very proud. I was expecting a negative reaction, because where I'm from that would never have happened. I'm proud of the administrator also. She has come out to some parents at a Parent Meeting and has shared much more about her own life. I guess it's been a growing process for all of us. As we inch out a little bit, then she does also and people react positively . . . and **we inch "out" a little bit more!** It's becoming like an extended family here.
>
> As told by a lesbian mom whose child attends a Seattle child care program.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Welcoming signs of inclusion
- Sensitive staff responding to the uniqueness of the family with two moms
- Staff support of woman as parent and mom
- Administrator who is "out"

Story Three Well, I Have Two Moms and You Only Have One

Tell me about a time when a child or children in your care had an exciting discovery, learning moment, or story to tell you about diversity or honoring differences.

> I remember a time when one of the children was giving another child a bad time about not having a dad. I was really worried about the child's feelings being hurt. Then he looked over at the kid and said really calmly, **"Well, I have two moms and you only have one."** It was a real eye-opener for me that this child had enough self-esteem that he could come back with something like that.
>
> As told by a European American man who is the owner/director of a center in North Seattle.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Child with a strong sense of self
- Pride in his family

Story Four Two Moms Just Like You!

Think of a time when you felt a rewarding sense of working in partnership with a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender parent in support of their child's development. Tell me about that time.

> We had one openly lesbian family in the older class. The children had few questions; they just "got it." Early in the year the children were introduced to a persona doll family. "Toby" had a mom and a mamma. The first time the children met "Toby" and his moms, one of our lesbian parents was part of the circle time and her son was snuggled on her lap. As soon as they met this persona family, one child said, **"Two moms, just like you!"** as he pointed to his friend sitting in his mother's lap. The mother and child looked proud. More importantly, the other children were very excited to meet another two mom family. Throughout the year we used the persona dolls to represent many family situations that the class felt a need to discuss.
>
> As told by a gay affirming director of a co-op in Seattle.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Teacher comfortable with families with two moms and modeling this comfort level to children
- Family who is out for children to experience in their everyday life
- Resources such as persona dolls that can depict different family configurations for children
- Inclusive and warm environment created by the openness of teacher
- Pride in family

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Story Five All Families Are Welcome

Tell me about a time when you had an experience with or learned something about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families that helped you feel more connected with their children.

> I took a class last quarter. It was an anti-bias class at North Seattle Community College. In that class I read an article called "Katie Has Two Moms." That article made me really stop and think. I was struck by all that we do that is biased toward having a mom and a dad. All our applications say "mom" and "dad." I began to think about how our forms need to be more inclusive. The child may be living with two moms, an aunt or uncle, grandma . . . When a lesbian couple came to fill out our application form last year, they just crossed out "dad" and put "partner." Many of the single moms just cross it out. There are lots of ways we could be more sensitive. We could make the paper work more inclusive by updating the parent handbook, forms, applications and information sheets in the student files. We could have more books and discussions. We could be more sensitive and inclusive in the parenting classes we offer and on the parent board. I am currently trying to update our forms and the parent handbook. It isn't done yet. There is a poster in our hallway that says ***"All Families Are Welcome."*** It depicts a lesbian couple and a young child. My boss bought them for all of her centers to post. We had an "out" staff person who worked here years ago. She'd have loved the poster.
>
> As told by a center director/service provider for children of University students.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Anti-bias classes and training for teachers
- Child care provider with a heightened sense of awareness and willingness to change
- Desire to be more sensitive and inclusive to different family needs
- Updated policies, parent handbook and forms that reflect an openness to all family configurations
- Signs in the center of welcome and inclusion

We could make the paper work more inclusive by updating the parent handbook, forms, applications and information sheets in the student files.

Story Six We Are More Alike Than Different

Tell me about a time when you had an experience with or learned something about lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender families that helped you feel more connected with their children.

One day after having a discussion with another African American woman about our experiences around black culture, she came out to me. We also discussed experiences she and her children were having. It caused me to recall my own experiences with my children when they were small. I realized how similar our experiences were. I often had to soothe my children after they were called a name or excluded from games because they were black and they were girls. We related similar stories. We talked for several hours and I came away understanding that **we are more alike than different**. I've tried very hard to keep this story in front of me each day as I see our day care children doing what I call the separation dance of "You're so different from me so that makes me better than you." I address it immediately and we talk about it.

As told by a director from South Seattle who is African American and lesbian.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Sharing stories about our lives
- Realization that exclusion hurts our children
- Teacher's commitment to stopping hurtful things immediately
- Taking advantage of teachable moments to talk to children

Story Seven: Two Dads and a Little Boy

Think about a time when you felt a rewarding sense of working in partnership with lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender parents in support of their child's development. Tell me about this time.

That's an easy one. We have a gay family with **two dads and a little boy**. One is Papa and the other is Dad. The first time I met them they were so interested in our center and what we do. They became very involved parents. A month after they were here we were in a neighborhood parade—it was a really hot day and not very many families showed up. But they both came with their son and I spent a lot of time watching them. What a neat bond they all had together. They were proud of our school. We got to talk quite a bit that day. It was a neat connection. They are both—for a lack of a better word—both such gentlemen. They really give that extra attention, both to their son and to the school. If I compare them to other dads at the school, they really stand out as special people.

As told by a European American woman who is director of a large center in North Seattle.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Having time to talk to LGBT parents and get to know them
- Observing LGBT parents interact with their child
- Two parents who care about their child's life and school

Story Eight To Someone Special

To let me know a little bit about the child care situation you have, think about a day where everything about your child care situation arrangement really worked for you and your child—a day when you felt particularly satisfied at the end of the day. Tell me the story of that day.

Our child care is in downtown Seattle near where we work. The center has a diverse group of boys and girls of other nationalities and cultures. We were looking for a provider that was both close to work and that had a diverse population because both of the boys are Cambodian. My partner is Japanese. When we were choosing the center however, sexuality wasn't an issue for us. Mostly we wanted diversity and warmth and closeness to work, although, if we had felt the least bit of adversity about our family we probably would not have chosen this center. A great day? It's just daycare. But overall each day is good. They made a plate with each of the kid's families on it and our son had both of us—his daddies on it. So, I trust that we are accepted. In fact, the center called us before the mother's day celebration and asked us how we would like to approach the issue. We told them to have our son simply write, **"To someone special."**

As told by bi-cultural gay dads parenting their two sons, ages two and four.

I trust that we are accepted. In fact, the center called us before the mother's day celebration and asked us how we would like to approach the issue. We told them to have our son simply write, "To someone special."

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Close proximity to workplace
- Appreciation for diversity
- Feeling of acceptance based on the center's actions and activities of inclusion
- Staff's willingness to ask questions to gain understanding about what works for unique families
- Unspoken warmth and openness toward family
- Celebrated vs. tolerated

Story Nine The Child Care Center That Would Be Gay Friendly

If you could wave a magic wand and change three things about your experience with child care that can significantly heighten the quality of child care and learning atmosphere for the children of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents, what would they be?

1. **The child care center would be gay friendly.** I mean to say that it is accepting. It doesn't have to be a gay environment, but an environment that really accepts rather than just tolerates all children—an environment of unconditional acceptance. For example, we had a problem with the baby's social worker, she wouldn't even make eye contact with my partner when they met. Before meeting my partner, she was very nice to me. When the conditions changed the social worker was no longer accepting. This acceptance issue belongs to everyone and extends to the foster care system, social workers, etc.

2. The center would have a racially integrated group. . . so our child won't grow up with only Native Americans. We know that she will learn to live in a world outside the tribe. We doubt that she will go back to live in her original home and tribe. I'd like a center to have gender diversity where men work, too. I know of a center in Seattle that has men and women, straight and gay together. That would be ideal. Seattle schools could be the model. We haven't seen the fathers come to the parent/child gatherings and that is a shame.

3. Our big issue is simply having a child care center at all—let alone one that is accepting of our sexual orientation, ethnicity and our child's disability. As we shared before, we have to drive an hour and a half to the nearest facility approved for foster children.

As told by a Native American lesbian mom with a child with special needs.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Unconditional acceptance of children and families
- Entire system of caregivers accepting of all diverse families
- Value for a center that has racial and gender diversity among children and staff
- Accessibility and acceptance to centers of choice

Story Ten: I Mean They Say That Right in the Handbook!

Think about a time when you were pleased to see indications that your child's provider honors diversity and respects differences. Tell me about that.

I always look for diversity and respect in a place. I feel very strongly about it. When I first visited the center, I was looking at a book about a farmer and I noticed that the teacher had changed the pronouns in the book from he to she. It was really neat. He was also a presenter at workshops. He always told me how pleased he was that I was a part of his center. It was great to experience the other teacher getting books from the library about strong women, or about single parents, or kids of different races and cultures. She wanted each kid to bring pictures of their families. She was very responsive to my friend that I live with who is not exactly my partner, but is very involved in my child's life. She was always very welcoming to her. And the co-op has been great. In their policies and procedures they include not discriminating based on sexual orientation. They also have a section in their handbook on how to build an anti-bias curriculum in the center and there are parents working there all the time. In another part of the handbook they talk about language—you know the way animals are always a "he" and we need to use a "she." I notice that they do change the pronouns a lot. They also tell parents to stretch the children's imaginations when they are playing and deciding who's going to be what—like when they're deciding who's going to be mommy and more than one wants to be the mommy—you can suggest that there are two mommies. **I mean they say that right in the handbook!** It's just so welcoming to me. I was told that these kind of ideas are talked about at interviews with the staff. I have felt so welcome and respected and that is probably the reason that there are other lesbian families there. The center also has posters up of all different kinds of families and books that are progressive—you know construction workers—half being women and half being men—that kind of thing.

As told by an elementary school teacher and single parent lesbian mom.

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Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Staff training
- Anti-bias curriculum
- Reflections in the environment of diverse families
- Inclusive language
- Non-discriminatory policies and procedures
- Culturally sensitive leader of center
- Explicit gay friendly language in parent handbook

Story Eleven And of Course, We Changed It Right Away

Think of a time when you felt especially proud of your child care services, center, teachers and/or staff—when you felt pleased and grateful to be associated with them. Tell me the story.

We've worked hard on making our curriculum be more inclusive. And we've had parents, not especially lesbian and gay parents, point out to us when we weren't being very inclusive in our language. Like when we would do a unit on community helpers and were saying policemen.
We used to have a cook who was lesbian. I was really proud when she pointed out to us that our personnel policy's non-discrimination statement did not include sexual orientation. **And of course, we changed it right away.** None of us had really noticed.

As told by a Euopean American center director in North Seattle.

All schools would have an anti-bias curriculum and libraries would have books of all kinds like "Asha's Mums."

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Desire to honor requests of the parents and employees served
- Open environment where everyone can express their feelings
- Respect for others' rights
- Willingness to change
- Commitment to follow through and make change

Story Twelve I Would Wave My Magic Wand

If you could wave a magic wand and change three things that could add to the quality of child care and learning environment for lesbian, gay and bisexual parents and their children, what would they be?

1. **I would wave my magic wand** for a time to come when we would not have to ask these questions.
2. All schools would have an anti-bias curriculum and libraries would have books of all kinds like "Asha's Mums."
3. Teachers and providers would really relax and get over their homophobia!

As told by two gay dads with an adoptive son—both dads are "out" teachers living on the Eastside.

Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Knowledge that brings about change in the future
- Anti-bias curriculum
- Desire for all children to have access to resources that affirm diverse family structures
- Strong desire to diminish fear and misunderstanding about homosexuality

Story Thirteen I Got to Walk in the Parade with My Son

To let me know a little bit about the child care situation you have, think about a day where everything really worked for you and your child—a day when you felt particularly satisfied. Tell me the story of that day.

A child's needs were put before any other agenda.

The most satisfying day I have had so far was a day when I was invited to my son's school for a parade. My ex-wife, my son's biological mother is also a teacher at his school. My appearance as a transgender parent is difficult for her and the other teachers, though not for my son. However, this particular day of the parade, my ex-wife asked me to come along and carry medicine for a little girl who has severe asthma attacks. This was an acknowledgement of my career and profession as a nurse. A child's needs were put before any other agenda . . . and **I got to walk in the parade with my son** . . . and even the principal thanked me for being there. This was a very satisfying day.

As told by a transgender parent and nurse.

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Emergent Themes/Compelling Forces:

- Willingness to put the child's needs before other agendas and personal fears
- Courage on the part of the parent to be "out" for the sake of her child
- Reinforcement from the principal for parent involvement of LGBT parents

Summary

On three different occasions, researchers, parents and guardians, child care providers, teachers and community leaders came together. They read the 23 selected stories and identified patterns, themes, categories and compelling forces found in each story. The final goal was to cluster like themes together and to give each cluster a topic heading.

Each community meeting followed these steps in carrying out the tasks:

- Participants broke into groups of six to eight persons.
- Each person in the group read each story silently.
- At planned intervals, participants chose stories that had a strong impact and read them aloud to the group.
- The silent reading continued.
- Participants then examined the stories to search for themes and compelling forces that enabled the positive phenomena to happen.
- All responses were written on cards and adhered to a large chart for all to see.
- Participants rearranged cards into similar categories.
- Participants agreed upon a topic heading for each cluster.

Themes and headings which emerged from each of the three community events were analyzed for similarities and differences. A final clustering of the themes and topic headings presented here are the stepping stones to future action and possibility.

Core Themes

1. **Staff Awareness and Enlightenment**

- Recruit and hire culturally diverse staff members reflective of the families served in the program, including sexual orientation.
- Provide interactive staff training on the topics of homosexuality and homophobia.
- Prepare staff to use "teachable moments" to affirm children and families.
- Demonstrate a genuine interest and sensitivity to family and child.
- Support and train directors and health providers to be culturally aware and responsive to LGBT families.

2. **Family Pride and Self Pride**

- Provide family activities that welcome and make visible different family structures.
- Invite parents/guardians to share family stories.
- Plan early childhood experiences that encourage children to talk about their families.
- Welcome extended family members.
- Support children's pride in their family make-up and cultural identity.
- Provide activities that build self esteem in children.

3. **Non-Discrimination Policies, Pr ocedur es and Practices**

- Make an explicit commitment in word and action to cultural diversity, including sexual orientation.
- Use inclusive language in parent handbook, forms, letters and family communications.
- Initiate policy prohibiting anti-gay language and behavior against parents/guardians, teachers and children.
- Include the category of sexual orientation in non-discrimination policies.

4. **Cur riculum and Envir onment**

- Explore, adopt, or expand an anti-bias and culturally relevant curriculum for your program.
- Select and utilize materials and resources which reflect and represent each child's family and culture such as books, persona dolls and posters.
- Include LGBT families when presenting lessons and stories about family.
- Focus on children first, issues second.
- Interchange male and female pronouns to avoid stereotypical roles for men and women.
- Display visible signs in the environment that are gay friendly and welcoming.

5. **Communication**

- Foster open communication between staff and families.
- Be willing to take risks and ask difficult questions to gain understanding.
- Use language that includes and recognizes family differences.
- Interact in ways that are courteous, non-judgmental and respectful of differences.
- Listen without judging.
- Explain differences matter-of-factly.

Each of the identified themes and clusters holds a seed of great potential for visioning a world of child care where children and families come first. These themes embody the best that is in child care. They now become the building blocks for what might be. They become the basis for "provocative propositions," written statements that provoke possibility for the future.

Section Three

Imagine a World

Provocative Propositions

Personal Steps

Next Step Initiatives

Conclusion—A Call to Action

"Culture" is the thread of love and acceptance that integrates all families and children—not a separate domain.

Imagine A World

"Imagine a world big enough for all of us."

—Mary Dispenza, Researcher

Imagine a world of child care big enough for all children and families. What would it look like? This was the question that challenged the Community Summit and WAEYC Conference participants. Out of these questions emerged possibility statements, or in Appreciative Inquiry terms, provocative propositions.

Provocative propositions are one of the final steps in the Appreciative Inquiry process. They are the most exciting, bold and daring propositions that bridge the best of what is (what we have found in our stories) with our intuition of what might be. They are provocative because they stretch our imagination and vision far beyond where we have been. Aristotle said, "A vivid imagination compels the whole body to obey it."

Provocative propositions answer the question: What would happen if we gave expression to our imagination about quality child care and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender parents/guardians and their children? They pave the way for recommendations for 'Next Step' initiatives to enhance the quality of child care.

To arrive at provocative propositions, we gave our Community Summit and WAEYC Conference participants the following assignment:

Imagine a world of child care *where these core themes or compelling forces are present even more, or more of the time. What would that look like? What would be in place in the world of child care that encouraged these forces to flourish?*

The statements that follow are in the actual words of the participants. Note they are cast in the present tense to express our vision as a reality, in the positive spirit of Appreciative Inquiry.

Provocative Propositions

Imagine A World . . .

What Would It

Look Like?

- *Every teacher and staff member is comfortable with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families and children.*
- *Child care centers are very clear in word and in action that all families are welcome!*
- *Teachers and staff are trained in diversity and anti-bias education.*
- *Every center has a non-discrimination policy including sexual orientation.*
- *Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teachers, staff and family members are out to each other and to the community.*
- *Children of LGBT families talk freely about their lives and families—even their donors.*
- *Words like partner, co-parent, guardian and extended family members appear on forms and written communication.*
- *Handouts are neutral using inclusive language so that every family sees themselves reflected.*
- *Diversity is a broad subject reflecting religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, abilities, gender and language.*
- *Books and images of LGBT families are in every center.*
- *Family pictures are displayed with pride.*
- *Children hear stories of great LGBT artists, musicians, inventors and leaders.*
- *Little boys play dress up in skirts and dresses and are not called "sissy."*
- *Children are validated every day by teachers and providers who recognize their family and honor their diversity.*
- *Workshops are offered in the evening for working parents on the topic of sexual orientation.*
- *S.T.A.R.S. and WAC are very clear about honoring differences and serving LGBT families.*
- *There are faces of color, different genders, and orientations reflected among teachers and providers.*
- *"Culture" is the thread of love and acceptance that integrates all families and children—not a separate domain.*
- *Learning World, garage sales and Target have multicultural, anti-bias materials for sale.*
- *Sears catalogue features two moms and two dads.*
- *"Visiting Specialists" have all kinds of materials to deliver.*

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Personal Steps

Participants were reminded of the power they have as individuals to make a difference and initiate change

A research project can be of immediate and direct benefit to the community. Time to allow the participants to imagine a world of enhanced quality of child care for LGBT parents and children opened their minds to new possibilities in their own lives. Participants were reminded of the power they have as individuals to make a difference and initiate change, and they made some on-the-spot commitments to taking individual action. Here are just a few examples of the participants' personal steps:

- "I'm going to educate myself because I don't have personal experience with LGBT families, so I can't impart the knowledge."
- "It's important for me to deal with my stuff."
- "I'm going to get training in homophobia."
- "I'm going to use more examples of gay characters and persona dolls."
- "I'm going to get the facts about LGBT persons, so I can share in a down to earth way."
- "It's important for me to be loving, warm and friendly to everyone."
- "My family handouts will be inclusive and gender free."
- "I'm going to ask the question—'Do you see yourself reflected in this?'"
- "I'm going to integrate anti bias, diversity awareness and policies into my trainings and whatever else I do—including my job interviews and I'm going to be more visible."
- "I'm going to organize a workshop for my co-workers at the Head Start Agency."
- "I'm going to bring more specific LGBT issues into my anti-bias trainings at day care centers."

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Next Step Initiatives

The following **Next Step Initiatives** are synthesized from the Community Summit. The Community Summit included stakeholders with representatives from child care providers, directors and teachers; LGBT parents, guardians and friends; Child Care Resources; Safe Schools Coalition; Seattle/King County Public Health Department; Seattle Comprehensive Child Care Program; Seattle Human Services Department; ECEAP (Early Childhood Education Assistance Program); Office of Child Care Policy; S.T.A.R.S. (Washington State Training and Registry System) and the King County Child Care Program.

The purpose of the Community Summit was to provide opportunity and a forum for stakeholders to interact with the data in order to arrive at Next Step Initiatives. This was done by reading the selected stories, identifying themes, imagining the best possible early childhood environment for LGBT parents and children, planning personal steps for change and visioning future possibilities. The following 10 Next Step Initiatives are recommended by our stakeholders as specific steps, in addition to the others identified in Core Themes and Provocative Propositions to enhance the quality of child care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and children.

1. **The Seattle City Council:**

   Continue to **support** the work of the Seattle Commission for Sexual Minorities and **consider recommendations** put forth in **Our Families ▼ Our Children.**

2. **Early Childhood and School Age Organizations and Agencies:**

   Encourage the early childhood **lobbyist to advocate** for legislative inclusion of LGBT families and issues.

3. **The State Training and Registry System (S.T.A.R.S.):**

   - Include **sexual orientation** and related issues such as **homophobia** as an essential part of curriculum.
   - Provide **consistent training** across the state in teaching and increasing understanding and **inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents and children.**

4. **School Age and Early Childhood Trainers:**

   Include **sexual orientation and understanding LGBT families** as a part of all trainings for school counselors, health care providers, child care providers, licensors and others who work in the field of child care.

5. **Office of Child Care Policy:**

   Incorporate **revisions in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC)** with specific attention to the connection between anti-bias and cultural relevance, including focus on sexual orientation.

6. **Child Care and Community Centers:**

   Plan **events that bridge** LGBT families with other families and the community.

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7. **Child Care Providers, Preschools and Centers:**

- Advocate for more **specific information on LGBT families** to be included in the anti-bias curriculum, state mandated trainings and licensing orientation sessions.
- Display welcoming and **inclusive signs and posters.**
- Have **resources** such as books and pictures reflecting LGBT families.

8. **Early Childhood and School Age Employers:**

- **Seek candidates** who value and reflect diversity of every kind—including sexual orientation.
- Provide **release time** to child care providers and teachers to receive anti-bias training with emphasis on sexual diversity.
- Include the **topic of sexual orientation** at meetings and in-services for employees.
- Provide **technical assistance** to providers wanting to make changes to create a more welcoming center.
- Provide sample **Commitment Contracts** that providers may adopt as a part of their enrollment process to ensure mutual agreement between the child care center and families in support of open communication and honoring diversity.
- Design **Inclusion Packets** for directors and child care providers which provide samples of non-discrimination policies, enrollment forms and procedures using language that is inclusive and supportive of LGBT families.
- Design **Traveling Packets** that child care providers and LGBT parents have on hand to give to friends and other families about LGBT families and child care.
- Develop a **Speakers Bureau** to inform and educate parents and the community about LGBT families and how we can support one another.
- Provide **workshops** for Head Start Agencies, ECEAP (Early Childhood Education Assistance Programs) and providers at convenient times and places to inform and educate about LGBT child care issues and concerns.
- Form a **Review Committee** to evaluate and recommend materials and resources for inclusive language, anti-bias views and the inclusion of LGBT characters, issues and concerns.
- Design a **Website** to continue communication and broadcast stories of the "Best" that is happening for LGBT families in early education and child care.

9. The Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force:

- Work with the **African American Child Care Task Force, Latino Child Care Task Force, Asian Pacific Islander Child Care Task Force** and communities of color to actively address the specific needs and challenges of LGBT families of color for inclusion and acceptance.
- Publish a **resource guide** including materials, trainings and resources that are available and accessible to parents/guardians and child care providers.

10. LGBT Families and Friends:

- Continue to **educate, inform and network** with other cultures and groups to work for inclusion.
- Give **voice** to the importance of including **curriculum, materials, etc.** in the child care or educational setting that reflect **Our Families ▼ Our Children.**
- **Volunteer** to join child care boards, task forces, parent groups, etc. to provide representation and increase understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues and concerns.
- **Come "out"** and tell your story whenever possible to your child's care provider or teacher.

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"Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die,
Life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly--
Hold fast to dreams, for when dreams go,
Life is a barren field, frozen with snow."

—Langston Hughes

Conclusion—A Call to Action

Our Families ▾ Our Children is both a catalyst and an invitation. As a catalyst it gives us snapshots of the future — snapshots which inspire us to develop more stories of success for providers and LGBT families. Initially the study was an invitation to child care providers, LGBT parents and guardians, community leaders and child care professionals to come together, think strategically and imaginatively about the future quality of child care for LGBT parents and children.

Now the invitation calls to all of us who care about children to act upon the **Core Themes**, the **Provocative Propositions** and the **Next Step Initiatives** included in this study. The information reveals the many strengths of child care when it is working at its best.

The Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force is committed to the call to action and the on-going challenge of giving life and spirit to the **10 Next Step Initiatives**. We invite you to join us in this exciting moment in our history. Please help us keep the dreams and stories alive by sharing this report with your co-workers, colleagues, families and friends.

For further information regarding **Our Families ▾ Our Children**, the on-going work of the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force and how you may get involved, please contact us at Child Care Resources—(253) 852-1908 ext. 201 or email: mcdispenza@msn.com.

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"Positive images lead to positive futures."

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Appendices

Resources

Bibliography

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Appendix A

Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force Needs Assessment
for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Families

CODE _____

Participant Agreement

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that ever has. —Margaret Mead

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your willingness to take part in the Child Care Needs Assessment Project. Our **purpose is to improve access to and quality of child care for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families**. The study is funded by the Pride Foundation, City of Seattle Comprehensive Child Care Program and King County Child Care Program. The study is being sponsored by the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force.

We have chosen an appreciative approach to interviewing. During the interview, you'll be invited to talk about times when things are working at their BEST for you and your child. As you tell about the successes, we come closer to finding ways to infuse more of this into the lives of our children. Simply put, we want to highlight the "very best of what is" in order to ignite our imaginations of "what might be." Our interviews will enable us to understand more fully the "life-giving forces" that improve the quality of care for all families—especially for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families.

As we analyze the data, themes will be identified and action statements will be developed around each theme. These action statements will describe "what could be" based on the data we gathered from the stories of the "best that is." We'll hold a community forum to dialogue together about what "should be" and validate our action statements. Once this is done, we will explore and identify all the forces that support or impede our goal.

Out of all this comes passion and commitment to change and implementation.

Our conclusions will be summarized in a written report and will be shared with the general public as well as with community leaders in the field of early childhood education and child care — all the time believing that **positive images lead to positive futures**.

Statement of Confidentiality

I understand that stories of success may be 'trumpeted' for all to hear. Neither my name nor the name or place of the child care provider will be used in any written copy. A final report or other document will not directly attribute any findings to my interview. I agree to have the interview audio taped and transcribed.

The audio tape will be destroyed after your stories have been transcribed unless we have your permission to use your taped stories as part of an oral history presentation of success stories.

You have my permission to use my taped voice.

Signature of Parent or Child Care Provider _____

Name of Parent or Child Care Provider _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Signature of Researcher _____ Date _____

Contact Person: Mary Dispenza—425 644 2468 / e-mail: mcdispenza@msn.com

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Appendix B

Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force Needs Assessment
for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Families

CODE _____

Confidential Information Form

Confidential

Please check the box(es) that apply:

- Family # of children _____ Ages _____ Hours of care each day _____
- Informal Provider: # of children _____ Ages _____
- Formal Provider: # of children _____ Ages _____

1. Your current age: Under 21 ⌟ 21-30 ⌟ 31-40 ⌟ 41-50 ⌟ 50 or older ⌟
2. Male ⌟ Female ⌟
3. Lesbian ⌟ Gay ⌟ Bisexual ⌟ Transgender ⌟ Heterosexual ⌟
4. If you are a LGBT parent are you out to your child care provider? Yes ⌟ No ⌟
5. If you are a LGBT child care provider are you out to your staff and the families you serve? Yes ⌟ No ⌟
6. What is your ethnicity? _____
7. If you are a child care provider what are the ethnic groups you serve? _____
8. Please describe your family structure: Co Parent ⌟ Single Parent ⌟ Foster Care Family ⌟

Blended Family (please describe) _____

10. What is your yearly family income? $25,000 or under ⌟ $26,000—40,000 ⌟

$40,000—60,000 ⌟ $60,000 or over ⌟

11. Who takes care of your child? family member ⌟ relative ⌟ friend ⌟ family home provider ⌟

child care center ⌟ other _____

12. What 3 steps did you use in selecting your child's care provider?

Thank you very much for your time and willingness to be a significant part of a great effort to improve the quality of child care for all children—especially children of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender families.

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Appendix C

Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force Needs Assessment
for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Families

CODE _____

Family Interview and Family Group Interview

Introduce self and project. Thank parents for willingness to participate.

1. To introduce me to your family, please think about a "peak family experience"— a time when your family was having a really great time together. Tell me the story of that experience.

   (In conversation about the story, ask questions as necessary to include family members, structure and ages of children in recording your story)

   - What made this experience so memorable?

2. To let me know a little bit about the child care situation you have, think about a day where everything about your child care arrangement really worked for you and your child—a day when you felt particularly satisfied at the end of the day. Tell me the story of that day.

   (In conversation about the story, ask questions as necessary to include type of child care and setting—length of day, before and after school, preschool, etc., to record in your story.)

   - What factors made this such a great day?

3. Think of a time when you felt a deep sense of satisfaction from working in partnership with your child's care provider or staff on behalf of your child's growth and development. Tell me the story.

   - What happened?
   - What did you and others say or do that gave you a sense of inclusion and partnership?

4. Think of a time when you felt especially proud of your child's care provider, center, teacher, and /or staff—when you felt pleased to be associated with them. Tell me what happened that led you to feel such pride.

   - Who was involved?
   - What was present in the people or setting that helped create that moment of pride?

5. Tell me about a time when your child came home and had a story to tell that made you feel that learning and appreciating differences was a real part of his or her child care / early childhood experience.

   - What was his or her story about?
   - What did you feel as you heard it?
   - What were the factors that led your child to tell this story?

6. Think about a time when you were pleased to see indications that your child's care provider or center honors diversity and respects different family structures. Tell me about that experience. (If the respondent needs examples of possible indications, here are some: books, posters, curricula, policies, forms, "out" role models, inclusive speech by care providers, etc.)

   - What did you see?
   - What was you response?
   - What were the factors that made this happen?

7. If you could wave a magic wand and change three things about your experience with child care to significantly heighten the quality of care and the learning atmosphere for your child(ren), what would they be?

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Appendix D

Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force Needs Assessment
for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Families

CODE _____

Informal and Formal Child Care Provider Interview and Group Interview

Introduce yourself and project. Thank care provider(s) for willingness to participate.

1. To introduce me to your child care setting, please think of a "really good" day—a day when you felt particularly pleased and satisfied with the work you do. Tell me the story of that day.

   (In conversation about the story, ask questions as necessary to include number of staff and number of children and their ages in your recording of the story.)

   - What made this "good day" so memorable?

2. Think of a time when you felt a rewarding sense of working in partnership with a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender parent in support of their child's development. Tell me about that time.

   - What did you or others do that gave you that sense of partnership?

3. Think of a time when you felt especially proud of your child care services, center, teacher and/or staff—when you felt pleased and grateful to be associated with them. Tell me the story.

   - What happened that led you to feel such pride?
   - Tell me about the people involved.
   - What was present in the people or setting that help create that moment of pride?

4. Tell me about a time when a child or children in your care had an exciting discovery, learning moment or story to tell you about diversity or honoring differences.

   - What happened?
   - What factors helped lead to this learning moment?

5. Tell me about a time when you had an experience with or learned something about lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender families that helped you feel more connected with their children.

   - What happened?
   - How has this sense of connection helped you in your work?

6. If you could wave a magic wand and change three things about your experience with child care that can significantly heighten the quality of child care and learning atmosphere for children of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender parents, what would they be?

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Bibliographies

A Primary and Elementary Booklist is available from Tracy Flynn, Seattle Public Schools—Schools Are For Everyone (SAFE). Phone: 206-298-7985.

Another Way of Being: Growing Up Lesbian and Gay and **We Take Pride in Presenting A Selection of Recent Gay and Lesbian Titles.** From the Seattle Public Library (free). Contact person: George Lawson, Humanities Department. Phone: 206-386-4115.

Anti-Bias Education Resource Guide. Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, 1997. $2 (add state sales tax in WA). PO Box 21428, Seattle, WA 98111. Phone: 206-233-9136. Fax: 206-233-0611. E-mail: ncamh@aol.com. Website: http://www/nwb/net/nwc

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network-Boston's Annotated Bibliography. 15 pages. Contact Bernadette Murphy. Phone: 617-327-6579. E-mail: murphybt@aol.com.

Picture Books for Children of Gay and Lesbian Parents. Gay and Lesbian Parents International, PO Box 43206, Montclair, NJ 07043.

Books

The Adoption Reader: Birth Mothers, Adoptive Mothers and Adopted Daughters Tell Their Stories. Ed. by S. Waida Ellis (Seattle, Seal Press, 1995). Personal essays and stories about the many complexities of adoption including cross-cultural adoption, open and closed adoption, the birth record debate, and adoption by lesbian couples.

Anna Day and the O-Ring, by E. Wickens (Boston, Alyson Publications, 1994). Includes photos of ordinary people. A story about a boy living with two moms and a dog named Anna Day.

Asha's Mums, by R. Elwin and M. Paulse (Toronto, Women's Press, 1990). Asha's main concern is going on a field trip that she almost misses because her teacher wants only her biological mom to sign the permission slip. Classmates tease Asha and then the teacher must deal with the different family configurations the children tell about.

The Duke Who Outlawed Jellybeans, by J. Valentine. (Boston, Alyson Publications, 1991). Short, engaging stories. In some, a child has two moms or two dads. Others depict strong, competent girls and/or gentle, caring boys.

Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price, by Warren Blumenfeld. (Beacon Press). An insightful book exploring how homophobia not only damages gay people, but heterosexual people as well. Includes an appendix with many workshop ideas.

How Would You Feel If Your Dad Was Gay? by A. Heron and M. Maran. (Boston, Alyson Publications, 1991). Michael and Jasmine have gay dads and Noah's mom is lesbian. When Jasmine tells her class that her dad is gay, all three kids find out that many people dislike gay and lesbian people. Their families and their school end up addressing prejudice.

Open Lives, Safe Schools: Addressing Gay and Lesbian Issues in Education. Ed. by D. Walling. (Bloomington, IN, Phi Delta Kappan Educational Foundation, 1996). A collection of compelling essays about everything from curriculum to openly gay educators — as well as the complete ground breaking story of Lawrence's "coming out" in the comic strip *For Better or For Worse*.

Oliver Button is a Sissy, by T. de Paola (New York, Harcourt, Brace, Janovich, 1979). Oliver deals with name calling and written slurs, but fools them all by excelling in his own area of talent.

Who's In a Family? by R. Skutch. (Berkeley, CA, Tricycle Press, 1994). Picture book with many different examples of families.

Calendar

Calendar of Diverse Families. Gay and Lesbian Parents' Coalition International. Phone: 619-296-0199.

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Curriculum

A World of Difference: An Activity Guide to Celebrate Diversity and Combat Prejudice for Children Ages 6-12 and **The Prejudice Book: Activities for the Classroom.** Elementary. Anti-Defamation League, Washington State Chapter. Phone: 206-448-5354.

Anti-Bias Curriculum, by L. Derman-Sparks and the ABC Task Force. Pre-K—Kindergarten. National Association for the Education of Young Children. Phone: 1-800-424-2460.

Awareness and Understanding: Teaching about Prejudice, Tolerance and the Holocaust, an activity book by Mary Lloyd for the Children's Museum, Seattle. 3rd-6th grade. Phone: 206-441-1768.

Learning the Skills of Peacemaking: An Activity Guide for Elementary-Age Children on Communicating, Cooperating, Resolving Conflict. (Jalmar press, 1987). Phone: 310-784-0016.

Words Can Hurt You: Beginning a Program of Anti-Bias Education, by Barbara Thomson (Addison-Wesley, 1993). Phone 1-800-423-8309.

Dolls

People of Every Stripe make a variety of beautiful persona dolls that can be used by children to tell their ongoing stories about living in different families. Contact them for a catalogue at PO Box 12505, Portland, OR 97212. Phone: 800-282-0612.

Exhibit

Love Makes a Family, a traveling photo exhibit depicting twenty diverse families with gay and lesbian family members. Different narratives accompany the photos, depending on the age of the audience. For information about bringing the exhibit to your conference or community contact The Family Diversity Project, PO Box 1209, Amherst, MA 01004. Phone: 413-256-0502. E-mail: famphoto@aol.com.

Films and Videos

Both of My Moms Are Named Judy: Children of Lesbians and Gays Speak Out. A 10-minute video featuring diverse children ages 7-11 who have lesbian and gay parents. The children talk about their experiences and what their teachers could do to help them with their feelings of being isolated. Produced as an in-service training tool for educators and administrators. Available from Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition, Box 43206, Montclair, NJ 07043. Phone: 202-583-8029.

It's Elementary: Talking About Gay Issues in Schools. A 60-minute award winning documentary is a must-see for all parents and adults who work with young children. It shows real teachers addressing gay stereotypes, two mom families, etc. in age-appropriate ways in elementary and middle school classrooms. New Day Films, 22D Hollywood Ave., Hohokus, NJ 07423. Phone: 201-652-5690. E-mail: TMCNDY@aol.com. Also available from Women's Educational Media, 2180 Bryant, #203, San Francisco, CA 94110. Phone: 415-641-4616.

My Family is Special. From the same filmmakers as *It's Elementary*, it tells the stories of children with gay and lesbian parents as well as children who: have a single mother; spend time between two households because their parents are divorced; have step-parents; are being raised by a grandmother or aunt; are adopted; have disabled parents; have parents of two different races; and, last but not least, children who have a mom and a dad who live with them. Women's Educational Media. Phone: 415-641-4616. E-mail: WEMDHC@aol.com.

Organizations

American Federation of Teachers' National Gay and Lesbian Caucus. Offers networking, resources and legal advice for gay and lesbian teachers. PO Box 19856, Cincinnati, OH 45219. Phone: 513-242-2491.

Child Care Resources. Offers resources (books, curricula, puzzles, personal dolls, pictures, posters, etc.) for parents and child care providers. Seattle: 2719 East Madison, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98112. Phone: 206-461-3708. Bellevue: 15015 Main St. #206, Bellevue, WA 98007. Phone: 425-865-9920. Kent: 841 N. Central Ave. #126, Kent, WA 98032. Phone: 253-852-1908.

Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force. For information regarding this study, contact Child Care Resources. Phone: 253-852-1908 ext. 201. Email: mcdispenza@msn.com.

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Gay Christian, Gay Dad, Gay Librarian. Offers a website which contains an assortment of book recommendations on parenting, coming out, relationships; links for librarians (even lists gay librarians), electronic book stores. Website: http://www.geocities.com/WestHollywood/5065/

Gay and Lesbian Parents Coalition International. Offers peer support, newsletters, conferences and literature for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender parents. A good resource for your parent library. PO Box 50360, Washington, DC 20091. Phone: 202-583-8029. E-mail: glpci@glpci.org. Website: http://www.qrd.org/www/orgs/glpci/

Gay Fathers' Association of Seattle. Offers support group, social activities, newsletters and forums for gay and bisexual fathers in Seattle. Phone: 206-324-4359.

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network, Washington State Chapter. Offers a great 60-90 minute workshop called "Making Schools Safe," for staff meetings (K-12) after which a tub of resources can be borrowed, containing books and videos for continuing self-study by staff. Provides crisis support and advocacy to students, educators and families. 1202 E. Pike, Suite 569, Seattle, WA 98122. Phone: 206-343-8387. E-mail: GLSENWA@aol.com

Kaleidoscope of Families. A support and social group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender parents, sponsored by Stonewall Recovery Services. Childcare is provided for meetings for ages 3 and up. Phone: 206-461-4546.

Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (P-FLAG). A nonprofit organization with chapters all across the country helping parents, children and friends learn to appreciate and support gay people. Provides support, education and advocacy. Distributes excellent brochures. Local chapters meet monthly. Share concerns, ask questions, good people. P-FLAG Seattle. Phone: 206-325-7724. E-mail: SeaPFLAG@aol.com. Contact National P-FLAG for more information. 1101—14th St NW, Suite 1030, Washington, DC 20005. Phone: 202-638-4200. E-mail: info@pflag.org. Website: http://www.pflag.org

The Safe Schools Coalition of Washington. Conducts the Safe Schools Anti-Violence Documentation Project, offers crisis support and on-going advocacy for students, educators and families who experience anti-gay harassment and violence in Washington State schools, public and private, provides technical assistance and training for schools as they work toward becoming safe for every child, educator and family. 814 NE 40th Street, Seattle, WA 98105. Phone: 206-632-0662 ext 201. E-mail: FKTakamura@aol.com or Jerryp2wa@aol.com. Website: http://safeschools-wa.org/safe

Periodicals

Love Makes a Family. A quarterly newsmagazine for and about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender parents. Love Makes a Family, PO Box 11694, Portland, OR 97211. Phone: 503-228-3892. E-mail: lmfamily@teleport.com

Teaching Respect: News from the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network of Washington State. This newsletter is a benefit for members, full of local, state and national news, new resources and thought-provoking essays. Membership: $35 per year ($15 for students). GLSEN-Washington, 1202 E. Pike, Suite 569, Seattle, WA 98122. Phone: 206-343-8387. E-mail: GLSENWA@aol.com

Teaching Tolerance. This free, semi-annual magazine contains concrete ideas to help teachers foster equity, respect and understanding. It is not focused on sexual orientation, but its lesson plan ideas address concepts such as prejudice and name-calling. Southern Poverty Law Center, 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104. Phone: 334-264-0286.

Postcards and Posters

Kaleidoscope Poster: Celebrating Gay and Lesbian Families. Michael Butler, Stonewall Recovery Services, 430 Broadway Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98102. Phone: 206-461-4546.

Pride postcards, written in large, colorful, bold lettering. Syracuse Cultural Workers, Box 6367, Syracuse, NY 13217. Phone: 315-474-1132.

Rainbow Posters that say "All Families Welcome." Joe Breakey, 5749 Twin Maple Lane, Seattle, WA 98105. 206-525-3100.

Unite Against Homophobia Poster. Asian Pacific Aids Council, 316 Maynard South, Seattle WA 98104. Phone: 206-467-0884.

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Williams, Rita F., "Survey Guided Appreciative Inquiry: A Case Study." Journal of the Organization Development Network, Vol. 28, Nos. 1 and 2, 1996, p. 43.

It has given us snapshots of the future — snapshots which inspire us to develop more stories of success.

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Notes

For further information regarding **Our Families ▾ Our Children**, the on-going work of the Lesbian and Gay Child Care Task Force and how you may get involved, please contact us at Child Care Resources—(253) 852-1908 ext. 201 or email: mcdispenza@msn.com

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